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Downham Rural District

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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR 1953

Including the Report of the Senior Sanitary Inspector  
(MR. G. S. SENNITT, M.R.SAN.I., M.S.I.A., A.M.INST.P.C.)

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DR. C. T. DARWENT, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

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Arthur Watson, Downham Market



# DOWNHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE:—

*Chairman:* Mr. H. G. Teverson

*Vice-Chairman:* Mr. C. W. Thornhill

Mr. W. Addison	Mr. J. Hunter
Mr. S. Bailey	Mr. M. L. Hutson
Mr. E. Barker	Mr. H. Leonard
Mr. W. H. Bentley	Col. E. R. Pratt
Mr. A. J. Blott	Mr. S. J. Proctor
Mr. W. R. Dent	Mr. F. Starling
Mr. A. Dye	Mr. S. F. L. Warner
Mr. H. Gates	Mr. R. R. Wilde
Mr. F. Green	Mr. E. J. Wright
Mr. P. Hall	Mr. G. G. Wright

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are *ex-officio* members of the Committee.

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## Public Health Officers of the Local Authority:—

### Medical Officer of Health—

Dr. C. T. DARWENT, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

also holds appointments of

Assistant County Medical Officer of Health.

Assistant School Medical Officer.

Medical Officer of Health, Downham Urban District Council.

Medical Officer of Health, Marshland Rural District Council.

### Sanitary Inspector—

G. S. SENNITT, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A., A.M.Inst.P.C.

### Additional Sanitary Inspector—

G. L. FIELD, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

### Clerk to the Health Department—

J. R. OSLER

STOKE FERRY,

May, 1954

To the Chairman and Members of the Downham Rural District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I submit for your consideration my Annual Report on the sanitary circumstances, health and vital statistics for the district during the year ending 31st December, 1953.

The general health of the district has been satisfactory and calls for no special comment.

The Birth Rate (18.07) is higher than that for England and Wales and the Administrative County. The Death Rate (9.3) is lower than that for England and Wales and the Administrative County. The number of Live Births (449) shows an increase of 52 over the previous year, and the number of Deaths an increase of 10.

The number of Notifiable Infectious Diseases has decreased by 319 over the previous year.

In January and February a part of your district was severely damaged and flooded by water which poured through breaches in the banks of the Great Ouse River. Under Section 'A' I have attempted to outline in detail the disastrous nature of the floods. For this report I am greatly indebted to my Senior Sanitary Inspector and Mr. S. Boughen, the Senior Welfare Officer for Area 7, who both did excellent work to relieve the distress in the area.

I should like to thank the Officers of my Department for their help and co operation during the year under review.

C. T. DARWENT,

*Medical Officer of Health*

# SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS—1953

Area (in acres) .....	124,152
Population, 1931 (Census) .....	19,962
Population, 1951 (Census) .....	24,508
Population 1953 .....	24,840
Number of separate Dwellings occupied 1953 .....	7,262
Rateable Value, 1953 .....	£81,177
Product of a Penny Rate, 1953 .....	£325

LIVE BIRTHS	449	Rate 18.07				
	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural	Rate England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	425	205	220			
Illegitimate	24	14	10			
	<hr/> 449	<hr/> 219	<hr/> 230	18.07	15.5	15.51

## STILL BIRTHS (Rate per 1,000 live and still births)

	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural	England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	12	4	8			
Illegitimate	—	—	—			
	<hr/> 12	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 8	26.03	22.75	21.05

DEATHS (all causes)	Total	Male	Female	Rate Downham Rural	England & Wales	Administrative County
	228	126	102	9.3	11.4	11.71

## DEATHS (from Puerperal causes)

Puerperal & Post Abortive Sepsis	Nil	
Other Puerperal causes	Nil	18.23

## INFANT MORTALITY (Rate per 1,000 live births)

	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural	England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	11	8	3			
Illegitimate	—	—	—			
	<hr/> 11	<hr/> 8	<hr/> 3	24.5	26.8	25.93

## DEATHS from—

Cancer (all ages) .....	50
Measles (all ages) .....	Nil
Whooping Cough .....	Nil
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) .....	1



## Section A

### NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Area ..... 124,152 acres  
 Population ..... 24,840

DEATHS. The total number assigned to the District as given by the Registrar General 228, an increase of 10 on the figure for 1952. The Death Rate of 9.3 per 1,000 compares very favourably with that for England and Wales, 11.4.

BIRTHS. The number (449) shows an increase of 52 compared with last year. The birth rate is 18.07.

MATERNAL MORTALITY. There were no maternal deaths, the credit for which is due to the excellent services rendered by the District Nurses, members of the Maternity Unit and the General Practitioners.

INFANT MORTALITY. The number of infants dying under the age of one year was 11. Seven of these infants were under four weeks old. Prematurity was a causative factor.

#### Flood and Gale Damage—31st January, 1953.

In common with many East Coast Areas, the Rural District suffered severe flooding as a result of the disastrous tidal "surge". Seven breaches in the banks of the River Great Ouse between St. Germans and Denver resulted in the flooding of 135 dwellings including 36 Council houses and other business properties, the depth varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 4' 6". Around 5,000 acres of good farm land was affected by the water, which had a high salt content.

The biggest breach, approximately 60' wide, occurred in the east bank just to the north of the Magdalen railway bridge, and it was not until 6th February, that this breach was finally sealed by the Great Ouse River Board, which utilised local, armed forces and student labour. Three breaches at St. Germans, Stow Bardolph and Salters Lode were closed during the same night, 31st January-1st February by local labour, most praiseworthy efforts. Most of the water which poured through the breach in the west bank just to the north of the bridge at St. Germans had gone by the 2nd February, and it was possible to commence rehabilitation measures almost at once.

At the peak period, flood water lay across Station Road, Watlington from St. Mary Magdalen bridge to the "Railway Tavern" Public House. It extended from a point about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south-west of the railway level crossing at Common Road, Runcton Holme to St. Peters and then across to Setch and over to low lying land to the south of Wormegay village.

Breaks in the west bank at Salters Lode and Stow Bridge resulted in the flooding of much land between the Stow Pumping Station, Barroway Drove and Nordelph, though only 5 houses were slightly affected.

The main roads to Wisbech and King's Lynn were closed for several days, as was the main railway line from Downham to King's Lynn.

Over two weeks elapsed before all flood water had gone, the Great Ouse River Board having utilised a vast assortment of mechanical plant, including huge pumps in the repair operation.

The only casualty in the District as a result of the floods was Mr. John MacDonald, aged 67, who lived alone in some comparatively isolated farm buildings between Watlington and St. Peters. He was presumably drowned whilst trying to reach safety.

The large majority of people from the flooded property had friends or relatives in the area, and they made their own arrangements for evacuation. Temporary rest centres were, however, set up at the Chapel Hall at Watlington and at the School, St. Germans, and some of the Council's Officers assisted the Welfare Officer and his staff in transporting about 40 people to the Howdale Home, Downham Market.

A large number of cattle and other animals were removed by their owners, but eventually the carcasses of 10 cattle, 8 pigs and approximately 800 fowls were collected and buried by the Council. Many more fowls were buried by their owners.

The Council's direct labour staff were mustered early on the morning of 1st February, and various services were performed during the emergency. The cesspool emptier, together with another machine loaned by the East Elloe R.D.C. was utilised in pumping water from underneath wooden floors in dwelling houses, rainwater cisterns and cesspools, etc.

Ample supplies of soap, brushes, disinfectant, detergent and an anti-mildew agent ("Shirlan") were distributed throughout the flooded area by the Council. Supplies were provided by the Red Cross and various manufacturers, some of them through the County Council. A quantity of furniture was also distributed by the County Council.

The Lord Mayor of London inaugurated a National Flood Distress Fund, and money was available to alleviate distress almost immediately. 2 cwt. of coal or coke was distributed free of charge to the flooded houses as soon as possible to aid drying out, and an attempt was made to secure the services of a portable hot air plant. This did not prove possible owing to the more urgent demands of other areas.

The Chairman of the Council called an emergency Meeting of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees together with representatives of the Parishes of Watlington and Magdalen and the Local Welfare Officer at the "Jolly Farmers", Stow Bridge on 3rd February, when all known information and a report on action taken by the Council's Officials was considered.

An offer by Messrs. Pest Control Ltd., to lend radio cars to provide a link with the flood area and their headquarters at Bexwell was accepted by the Council.

A survey was commenced as soon as possible of the extent of damage at all flooded dwelling houses to provide information for any future action.

Appeals for clothing were made by the W.V.S., with excellent response, and large quantities were distributed from local centres. Much clothing was sent to other areas. Foodstuffs of many different kinds were donated by the Commonwealth and other Countries, and generous supplies were distributed in the District by the County Council's Welfare Department.

The feeding of the labour engaged in the repair of the breaches presented a problem but the situation was met by the setting up of centres at Downham Market by the Red Cross and Salvation Army. Another centre set up at the School, St. Germans by the Red Cross was later transferred to the Magdalen School.

The Lord Mayor's Flood Distress Fund later assigned Assessors of the War Damage Commission to the District, and all properties were visited and appropriate recommendations made as to the monetary payment for loss of chattels and the repair and renovation of property.

The work of repair and renovation proceeded throughout the year, and considerable dampness tended to persist in walls and solid floors, mainly owing to the high salt content of the flood waters. It should be mentioned that a gift of several standards of timber were received by the Council from the Canadian Government for the repair of Council houses affected.

## Section B

### 1. GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

Norfolk Executive Council, 54, Prince of Wales Road, Norwich. Clerk,  
R. J. Cobb, Esq.

### 2. EAST ANGLIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL BOARD.

Senior Administrative Medical Officer:—Dr. J. B. EWEN, M.D., D.P.H.,  
Croft-Holme, 117, Chesterton Road, Cambridge.

#### (a) GENERAL.

- (i) Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Norwich.
- (ii) West Norfolk and King's Lynn Hospital, King's Lynn.
- (iii) Jenny Lind Hospital, Norwich.
- (iv) St. James Hospital, King's Lynn. (For chronic sick).
- (v) The Howdale Home, Downham Market.

#### (b) MATERNITY.

- (i) West Norfolk and King's Lynn Hospital (Maternity Unit).
- (ii) Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

#### (c) INFECTIOUS.

- (i) County Isolation Hospital, East Dereham.
- (ii) Isolation Hospital, King's Lynn.

#### (d) SANATORIA.

- (i) Kelling Sanatorium, Holt.
- (ii) Bramblewood Sanatorium, Holt.

#### (e) MENTAL.

- (i) St. Andrew's Hospital, Norwich.
- (ii) Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich.
- (iii) Heckingham Sanatorium, Norwich.
- (iv) Little Plumstead, Norwich.

### 3. MATERNITY SERVICES.

#### (a) District Nurses (showing Parishes and Villages served):—

Nurse Gerrard, High Street, Feltwell, Thetford.  
(Feltwell, Hockwold).

Nurse Hunns, Lower Green, Methwold, Thetford.  
(Methwold).

Nurse Smith, Nurse's Cottage, Stow, King's Lynn.  
(Wimbotsham, Stow, Wormegay, South Runciton).

Nurse Porter, Nurse's Home, Nordelph.  
(Downham West, Nordelph).

Nurse Walker, Rose Cottage, Stoke Ferry, King's Lynn.  
(Stoke Ferry, Whittington).

Nurse Mosley, 18, Council Houses, Wiggenhall St Germans, K. Lynn.  
(Wiggenhall St. Mary the Virgin, Wiggenhall St. Germans, Wiggenhall St. Mary Magdalen, Watlington Tottenhill).

Nurse Horn, 27, Barton Bendish, King's Lynn.  
(Marham, Shouldham, Shouldham Thorne, Stradsett, Fincham, Barton Bendish).

Nurse Russell, High Street, Hilgav, Downham Market.  
(Denver, Ryston, Fordham, Hilgay).

Nurse Rushworth, Nurse's Bungalow, Southery, Downham Market.  
(Southery).

Nurse Williams, 2, Queen's Close, Wereham.  
(Crimplesham, West Dereham, Wereham, Boughton, Wretton).

Nurse Armitage, 62, Station Road, Middleton.  
(Setch).



(b) **MATERNITY.**

Beds in Regional Hospital Board Establishments.  
Stow Hall Maternity Home, Stow Bardolph.

**4. AMBULANCE AND HOSPITAL CAR SERVICE.**

This is a County Council function and is controlled by the Joint Ambulance Committee. It is worked on an Agency basis by the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John and W.V.S.

The Downham Rural Area is jointly served by the Downham Market, King's Lynn and Thetford Ambulances. Infectious Disease cases are conveyed by East Dereham and King's Lynn Infectious Disease Ambulances.

**5. RED CROSS AND ST. JOHN MEDICAL LOAN DEPOTS.**

- (a) Wiggenhall St. Germans — Mrs. Richer.
- (b) Watlington — Mrs. Thomas.
- (c) Marham — Mrs. F. Brown.
- (d) Downham Market — Mrs. I. Burbeck.

**6. COUNTY MEDICAL SERVICES.**

- (a) **INFANT WELFARE CENTRES.**
  - (i) Downham Market
  - (ii) Outwell
  - (iii) Methwold

The Assistant County Medical Officer of Health attends at the above Sessions.

In addition, Village Infant Welfare Centres are held monthly at the following villages: Fincham, Hockwold, Hilgay, Northwold, Shouldham, Southery, Wimbotsham, Stoke Ferry, Watlington, Welney, West Dereham, Magdalen, Wormegay, Feltwell, St. Germans, Nordelph and Marham.

(b) **SCHOOL MINOR AILMENT CLINICS.**

Local Health Office, Downham Market (every Wednesday during term).  
Upwell and Terrington St. Clement.

(c) **SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC.**

Local Health Office, Downham Market (no Dental Officer available).

(d) **HOME HELP SERVICE.**

The County Home Help Scheme is doing excellent work and Home Helps are at present available for the following Parishes and Villages: Feltwell, Hockwold, Northwold, Stoke Ferry, Wereham, West Dereham, Stow Bridge, Watlington, Magdalen, St. Germans, Methwold, Denver, Ten Mile Bank, Southery, Hilgay, Fincham, Setch, Tottenhill, Wimbotsham, Runcion Holme and Bexwell.

**7. VENEREAL DISEASE CLINIC.**

West Norfolk and King's Lynn Hospital.

MALES: Tuesdays and Fridays—7 p.m.

FEMALES AND CHILDREN: Tuesdays and Wednesdays—3 p.m.

**8. DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION.**

- (i) Disinfection of premises is carried out by the Senior Sanitary Inspector's Staff.
- (ii) Disinfestation of bedding, clothing, etc., which cannot be carried out by this department, are sent to the East Dereham Isolation Hospital.

**9. LABORATORY SERVICES.**

- (a) Public Health Laboratory, Isolation Hospital, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich. Under the direction of Dr. I. M. Dowsett.
- (b) Public Analyst, W. Lincoln Sutton, Esq., F.R.I.C., Redwell Street, Norwich.

## Section C

### PREVALANCE OF & CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS & OTHER DISEASES.

#### SMALL POX.

No Cases were notified.

#### SCARLET FEVER.

Sixty cases were notified during the year as compared with thirty in 1952.

#### DIPHTHERIA.

For the 6th year in scuccession no cases have been notified. This happy position has undoubtedly been obtained by the active immunisation of infants in the past years. A certain complacency has now arisen amongst parents, who, believing diphtheria to be a disease of the past, are failing in their parental duty to have their infants and young children immunised. The Health Visitors and District Nurses have been instructed to encourage the parents to accept this free protection from a fatal disease.

#### DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

This is carried out free of charge by the family doctor or at the Infant Welfare Centres.

Under 1 yr.	1-4 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-14 yrs.	Total	Estimated 1953 Child Population
29	546	1413	1366	3354	5577

Total Immunised 3,354. Percentage: 60.15.

#### PNEUMONIA.

55 cases were notified, and 11 deaths from this cause were registered.

#### ERYSIPELAS.

2 cases, ranging between the ages of 20 and 65 plus, were notified.

#### MEASLES.

The number of cases notified shows a very marked decrease over the previous year, 141 cases as against 649 in 1952. The age group most affected was 5 years. There were no deaths from Measles.

#### INFECTIVE JAUNDICE.

2 cases were notified. The age groups varied from 15 to 20 years.

#### ACUTE POLIOMYELITIS.

Again it is gratifying to report no incidence of this disease.

#### TUBERCULOSIS.

9 cases of Pulmonary and 2 of Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during 1953. This is a decrease of three compared with the preceeding year. There was one death from the Pulmonary and none from the Non-Pulmonary type,

The following Table indicates the incidence of Tuberculosis in the District:—

Tuberculosis all forms			Rate per 1,000 populat on D.R.D.	County rate per 1,000 population
Male	Female	Total		
6	5	11	0.32	0.07

#### CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

No Schools were closed on account of any Infectious disease, etc., during 1953.

**Section D**  
**STATISTICAL TABLES, 1953**  
Causes of Death.

Table No. 1

Causes of Death	Male	Female	Total
1 Tuberculosis, respiratory .....	1	—	1
2 Tuberculosis, other forms. ....	—	—	—
3 Syphilitic diseases .....	—	1	1
4 Diphtheria .....	—	—	—
5 Whooping Cough .....	—	—	—
6 Meningococcal infections .....	—	—	—
7 Acute Poliomyelitis .....	—	—	—
8 Measles .....	—	—	—
9 Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	1	1
10 Malignant Neoplasm, stomach .....	5	5	10
11 Malignant Neoplasm, lung, bronchus ...	7	2	9
12 Malignant Neoplasm, breast .....	—	3	3
13 Malignant Neoplasm, uterus .....	—	2	2
14 Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neo- plasms .....	14	12	26
15 Leukæmia, Allukæmia .....	—	—	—
16 Diabetes .....	—	1	1
17 Vascular lesions of nervous system....	12	19	31
18 Coronary disease, angina .....	15	9	24
19 Hypertension with heart disease.....	2	2	4
20 Other heart diseases .....	20	20	40
21 Other Circulatory diseases .....	3	4	7
22 Influenza .....	—	—	—
23 Pneumonia .....	6	5	11
24 Bronchitis .....	5	1	6
25 Other diseases of the respiratory system	1	1	2
26 Ulcer of stomach and duodenum ....	2	—	2
27 Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa.....	1	—	1
28 Nephritis, Nephrosis .....	—	—	—
29 Hyperplasia of prostate .....	1	—	1
30 Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion .....	—	—	—
31 Congenital malformations .....	3	1	4
32 Other defined and ill defined diseases..	8	9	17
33 Motor vehicle accidents .....	2	—	2
34 All other accidents .....	17	3	20
35 Suicide .....	1	1	2
36 Homicide and operations of war .....	—	—	—
All causes....	126	102	228

**DEATH RATE OF CHILDREN** Table No. 2  
**CAUSES OF DEATH OF CHILDREN UNDER ONE YEAR—1953.**

CAUSES OF DEATH	AGE IN WEEKS					Total
	1	2	3	4	5-52	
1 Congenital malformations ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 Diseases of early infancy:	—	—	—	—	—	—
(a) Congenital debility.....	—	—	2	—	—	2
(b) Premature birth .....	—	—	—	—	1	1
(c) Injury at birth.....	—	—	—	—	—	—
(d) Atelectasis .....	—	1	—	—	—	1
(e) Others .....	—	2	—	—	3	5
3 Diseases of the Respiratory System .....	—	—	1	—	3	4
4 Diseases of Nervous System .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 Diseases of Digestive System .....	—	1	—	—	2	3
6 Tuberculosis Disease .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
7 Infectious Disease .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
8 Syphilis .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
9 Overlaying .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
10 Violence .....	—	—	—	—	—	—
11 All other causes .....	—	—	—	—	2	2
Total....	—	4	3	—	11	18

**NOTIFIABLE DISEASES—1953** Table No. 3  
Notification in Age Groups—

DISEASE	AGES												Total	Removed to Hospital	Deaths
	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5	10	15	20	35	45	65 & over			
Meales ...	5	7	13	10	10	75	7	2	9	3	—	—	141	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	11	12	29	32	26	85	12	1	2	—	—	—	210	—	—
Scarlet Fever	1	—	2	5	9	23	16	3	—	1	—	—	60	4	—
Pneumonia ...	5	—	6	1	—	12	3	2	9	3	4	10	55	—	11
Infectious Jaundice ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	—
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	—
Infective Encephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Food Poisoning ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	3	2	—
TOTALS	22	19	50	48	45	197	38	10	22	7	6	10	474	7	11



**MONTHLY INCIDENCE OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES—1953** Table No. 4

(Other than Tuberculosis)

DISEASE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Meales ...	12	3	19	33	33	23	14	2	—	1	—	1	141
Whooping Cough ...	—	—	—	3	6	17	27	57	43	24	18	15	210
Scarlet Fever	11	4	5	2	9	3	—	4	—	7	8	7	60
Pneumonia ...	20	13	2	—	5	2	1	2	2	5	—	3	55
Infectious Jaundice ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Infective Encephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Food Poisoning ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	3
TOTALS	44	20	26	40	53	46	42	66	47	38	26	26	474

**NEW CASES OF AND DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS—1953** Table No. 5

AGE IN YEARS	NEW CASES				DEATHS				Total
	Respiratory		Non Respir.		Respiratory		Non Respir.		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
— 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
— 5	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—15	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
—25	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—45	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
—55	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	5	4	1	1	1	—	—	—	1

## Section E

### REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report on the work of the Health Department during 1953.

Mr. J. Osler returned from Military Service to resume duties as Short-hand Typist/Clerk on 16th March, 1953, replacing Miss J. Carter who had been employed on a temporary basis.

I should like to express my appreciation to Members and all Officers of the Council for their assistance and co-operation throughout the year.

#### 1. SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS.

Drainage and Sanitation .....	801
Water Supply .....	109
Housing .....	746
Refuse Collection and Disposal .....	260
Movable Dwellings .....	100
Infectious Disease .....	146
Sewage Disposal .....	104
Rodent Control .....	73
Salvage .....	15
Factories .....	51
Figgeries .....	5
Petroleum .....	37
Milk and Dairies .....	14
Meat Inspection .....	26
Food Premises .....	116
Licensed Premises .....	23
Ice Cream Premises .....	55
Flood Damage .....	741
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits .....	224

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Total .. 3646

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Total 1951 .. 1756

Total 1952 .. 3057

#### 2. COMPLAINTS AND NUISANCES.

218 complaints of a variable nature were investigated. These again related mainly to housing defects, but complaints of unsatisfactory drainage, smells from accumulations of refuse and other organic matter and the keeping of animals were very numerous.

A large unlicensed camping site at Feltwell gave rise to general complaint, and the matter is mentioned in the section on movable dwellings.

### 3. NOTICES SERVED.

The number of written Notices served during the year was 79, classified as follows:—

	<i>Informal (Letters)</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Complied with</i>	<i>Complied with Notice: served dur- ing 1952</i>
Housing Repairs ....	52	6	21	13
Drainage .....	11	1	2	4
Food Premises .....	5	—	3	2
Dirty Conditions ....	4	—	4	1
Water Supply .....	7	—	3	—
Miscellaneous .....	—	1	1	—
Totals ..	79	8	34	20

In addition, verbal notice was sufficient in numerous cases to bring about required improvements, or to secure the abatement of nuisances. The notices not yet entered as “complied with” are still the subject of negotiation with the persons concerned.

The usual difficulties in securing much needed housing repairs were experienced throughout the year. A large number of organisations continually pressed the Government for amending Housing Legislation which would enable landlords to carry out these repairs, and in November, “Houses — The Next Step” was published as a White Paper by the Government. At last, some real attempt was proposed to arrest the decay of private housing !

### 4. FOOD AND FOOD PREMISES.

#### (a) *General.*

142 visits were made to food premises during the year, in addition to visits made to special premises such as Dairies and Licensed Houses.

Substantial improvements were brought about, all by informal action, and cleaner food handling practices were noticeable. In particular, more shops are displaying cakes wrapped in cellophane paper or behind glass instead of in open trays on the counter and wrapped bread was becoming more general.

One shopkeeper told me that his sale of cooked meats had increased considerably since the installation of a refrigerated display cabinet. I was pleased to note that his enterprise was being rewarded, as the public can help to a great extent by the transfer of custom to the cleaner and more progressive shops.

Many visits were paid to Licensed Houses in the District with the Brewery Surveyors. The Breweries have comprehensive schemes for the improvement of general sanitary conditions, such as the installation of bar sinks with hot and cold water, and the provision of water closets and requisite drainage systems.

Whilst I would commend the general cleanliness of licencees, I think that a good deal more attention should be paid to the regular flushing and cleansing of sanitary accommodation.

At 31st December, there were in the District:—

- 3 Fishmongers (selling wet fish)
- 12 Fish Fryers (including 2 mobile units)
- 15 Bakers
- 20 Butchers
- 13 Licensed Slaughterhouses (for private pigs)
- 5 Cafes
- 105 Licensed Houses.
- 96 General Food Shops.

(b) *Ice Cream.*

54 premises were selling ice-cream at the end of the year. All of this was pre-packed ice-cream made by the large companies. It is interesting to note that exactly twice as many premises were selling as in 1950. No manufacture of ice-cream is carried on in the District.

42 samples of ice-cream were taken and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory at Norwich with the following results:—

	No. of Samples	Grade			
		I	II	III	IV
Source 'A'	10	8	2	—	—
„ 'B'	10	7	3	—	—
„ 'C'	8	7	1	—	—
„ 'D'	7	2	1	2	2
„ 'E'	4	4	—	—	—
„ 'F'	1	1	—	—	—
„ 'G'	1	—	1	—	—
„ 'H'	1	1	—	—	—
Totals ..	42	30	8	2	2

The ice-cream supplied in the District is generally of a high bacteriological quality. The low quality of four samples from Source "D" was judged to be due to unsatisfactory sterilisation of the homogeniser at the Factory by the Health Department concerned. Subsequent samples were taken and these were satisfactory.

(c) *Unsound Food.*

The following food was voluntarily surrendered and condemned as being unfit for human consumption during the year:—

Beef — Home Killed — 176 lbs.

Imported — 140½ lbs

Pigs — 2 carcasses complete

2 heads

7 Plucks

31 lbs. of Pork

14 lbs. of Ham

1 lb. Bacon



Mutton — 33½ lbs.  
21 lbs. Mixed Plucks  
3 - 5 lb. 9oz. tins of Pork Luncheon Meat  
7 - 12 oz. tins of Corned Beef  
1 - 12 lb. tin of Ox Tongues  
2 - 16 oz. tins of Stewed Steak  
29 tins of Milk  
3½ lbs. of Cheese  
2 tins of Beans  
4 boxes of Smelts.

It should be noted that a large part of the trade has its own method of obtaining credit for obviously unsound food, blown tins, etc. The food is given up to wholesale representatives, who either take the food and dispose of it e.g. by incineration, or surrender it to one of the larger Local Authorities for condemnation and disposal.

Were it not for this, the list of food condemned would be very much longer.

(d) *Milk and Dairies.*

2 new Dairies and 11 Distributors were Registered during the year, making a total of 7 Dairies and 24 Distributors Registered by the Council.

As regards designated milk, 12 "Dealers" licences in respect of "Tuberculin Tested", and 9 in respect of "Pasteurised" were issued. In addition during the year the following "Supplementary Dealers' Licences" were issued to persons trading from premises in other districts:—

9 "Tuberculin Tested", 11 "Pasteurised" and 1 "Sterilised".

27 Producer-Retailers are not Registerable by the Council, but a watch is kept on distribution, as this function is the Council's responsibility.

Sampling of milk for the detection of B. Abortus and B. Tuberculosis by the County Council's Staff continued during the year.

The Medical Officer of Health found it necessary to serve 3 notices restraining the sale of milk from separate herds unless it has been pasteurised owing to the detection of B. Abortus in the milk. Two of these notices had been rescinded by the end of the year. In one case, the retail round was given up and all milk was sent for pasteurisation, and in the other case, it was presumed that the offending cow was either one which had died, or one which had been sold.

One notice in respect of tuberculosis remained on a whole herd from 1952, but this was soon rescinded. A cow from the herd was sent for slaughter and had to be totally condemned owing to generalised tuberculosis. In addition, three notices relating to individual cows which had excreted B. Abortus in their milk remained in force from 1952, and they were in force at the end of the year.

The representations of many local authorities through the Rural District Councils' Association for some control on the sale of cows proved to have excreted B. Abortus in their milk were not successful. The Ministries concerned expressed the view that there were too many technical difficulties.

## 5. HOUSING.

### (a) *General.*

An important and useful addition to the powers of Local Authorities was made by the passing of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1953, which enabled them to make Closing Orders instead of Demolition Orders in cases where the demolition of a house would have an adverse effect on other buildings.

Three such Closing Orders were made under the Act during the year.

No Demolition Orders under the Housing Act, 1936, were made during the year, but one "Undertaking" to repair was accepted by the Council. In addition "Undertakings" that two houses would not be used for human habitation were accepted from the Owners concerned.

Demolition of two houses which had been the subject of Demolition Orders in previous years was secured, and in one of these cases, the Council had to take the necessary action.

The Case concerned a cottage at Feltwell which a person had bought for £20, ostensibly as building material. Instead of effecting demolition, however, he carried out certain repairs and took up residence. As a result of an offer by the Council, he eventually accepted the tenancy of a Council house, but commenced a prolonged legal action as a counter to the Council's requirements as to demolition.

The action ended in the Council's favour, and the owner was asked to demolish. He did not do so in the time required and the Council carried out demolition on 10th September, 1953.

The case demonstrated the absolute inflexibility of a Demolition Order made under the Housing Act, 1936, under ordinary circumstances and conditions, and also the advisability of securing demolition at the earliest possible moment.

Houses vacated by new Council house tenants were inspected throughout the year, and many essential repairs were secured.

Only slow progress can be reported on the Rural Housing Survey.

Seven grants, totalling £2,032, were made by the Council under the improvement provisions of the Housing Act, 1949, and it was apparent that the facilities were becoming more widely known. The limits of expenditure under the Act were altered during the year from £100-£600 to £150-£800. It is felt that some modifications of the rather stringent conditions are necessary to enable the Act to be more widely used.

### (b) *Council Houses.*

#### WAITING LISTS.

On 30th September, 1953, the number of individual applications for permanent houses was 348, whilst 19 more applications were registered for temporary accommodation on the Stone Cross Estate.

Again, Feltwell had the greatest need for houses, with Southery second and Denver third.

No tubercular patients were rehoused during the year.

#### PERMANENT HOUSES.

A total of 100 houses were completed during the year, made up as under:—

60 three bedroomed

36 two bedroomed

4 one bedroomed bungalows.

This brought the number of permanent houses constructed during the post war housing programme to 482. 5 flats at Dyke House, Methwold, were improved and converted into 6 self-contained flats.

A further 124 houses of various types were under construction.

#### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.

121 converted hutments were still in use at 31st December, 1953, on the Stone Cross Estate, but a closure was commenced during the year at the Feltwell Airfield. Out of 46 hutments, 18 were vacant and ready for disposal at the end of the year.

#### GENERALLY.

At 31st December, 1953, the number of inhabited dwellings controlled by the Council was as follows:—

Traditional Houses .....	876
Pre-fabricated Houses .....	76
Temporary Houses .....	149
Requisitioned Houses .....	2
Other Properties .....	3
	<hr/>
Total ..	1106
	<hr/>

#### (c) *Private Enterprise Housing.*

25 permanent and 6 temporary houses were completed during the year, whilst the construction of 23 permanent houses had been commenced.

The total number of houses erected post war by private enterprise up to 31st December, 1953 was 149 permanent and 72 temporary.

#### 6. MOVABLE DWELLINGS.

3 new licences to station and use movable dwellings (trailer caravans) were issued making a total of 11 licensed on 31st December, 1953.

In addition, one camping site at Feltwell became licensed near the end of the year. This site was a large one which had caused much concern by reason of the very bad sanitary conditions appertaining. The site was used by seasonal agricultural workers of the "dealer" type, who lived in trailer caravans, tents and sheds on wheels. The site was grossly overcrowded, refuse was strewn all over, and the inadequate privy and pail sanitary accommodation was seldom used. In fact faecal matter was deposited all over adjoining land.

The owner did not comply with requests to clean up the site and it became necessary for the Council to take proceedings for nuisance under the Public Health Act, 1936. A Nuisance Order was obtained, which he did comply with.

An application for a camping site licence under the Public Health Act was received, and a Licence was granted subject to the observance of strict sanitary conditions. The owner was given a reasonable time to bring the site up to the required standard.

The sanitary conditions on the sites of individual movable dwellings were invariably highly satisfactory.



## 7. PUBLIC CLEANSING.

### (a) *Refuse Collection and Disposal.*

The fortnightly collection of refuse was maintained throughout the District during the year, apart from isolated properties which received a less frequent service. The "Kerbside" system of collection continued in operation and the containers used varied greatly, though the lack of proper lids was a common feature. This greatly encourages flies and vermin. It is felt that the Council should begin to insist on proper refuse bins with close fitting covers. Two Karrier Moving Floor Van type collecting vehicles with a driver-loader and loader to each are used. These have a separate compartment at the front for waste paper salvage, which is also collected.

Six refuse tips, situated at Wimbotsham, Hilgay, Shouldham, Whittington, Feltwell and Hockwold were utilized. Some trouble with fire was experienced at the Feltwell and Whittington tips, and control by the Council's mobile labour was very difficult owing to spontaneous combustion, hot ashes and the activities of unauthorised persons. Most of the tip surfaces are "sealed" with soil cover obtained from various sources. Treatment with insecticides is carried out periodically, in addition to rodent control treatment.

### (b) *Salvage of Waste Paper.*

About 18 tons of waste paper were sent to the Board Mill with which the Council have a five year contract, and a surplus of £91:8:11 resulted at the end of the year.

The market for waste paper had completely recovered, and there were no restrictions on the amount or type of paper to be accepted.

### (c) *Pail Emptying.*

The emptying of pail closets once weekly during the daytime was continued in the Parishes of Hilgay, Denver, Fincham, Downham West and Feltwell; the full cost being met by Special Parish Rates in each case. Some properties in Nordelph also received the service at a charge of £2 per pail per annum.

Collection was carried out primarily by the Cesspool Emptier Vehicle staffed by a Driver/Loader and Loader. Occasionally, however, when the demand for cesspools to be emptied was heavy, the Bedford Tipper Vehicle fitted with a special nightsoil tank was brought into use in addition.

Bulk disposal of pail contents was effected by composting with straw and disposal on farm land. Straw composting has done much to ease the disposal problem.

The problem of disposal of pail contents at numerous properties in villages not served remained very difficult, and many disputes and complaints of nuisance resulted. Some pails have to be carried for very long distances.

### (d) *Cesspool Emptying.*

In addition to normal work the cesspool emptier was utilized during the floods to perform such tasks as draining sub-floor-spaces, emptying flooded cesspools and rainwater cisterns, etc.

A machine was also loaned to the Council by the East Elloe R.D.C. for several days during the flood period.

The work carried out was split up as follows:—

#### NORMAL DUTY.

Total No. of Cesspools emptied .....	390
No. of sediment tanks (mostly at sewage works) emptied ..	58



FLOOD DUTY.

Sewage Plants .....	2
Flooded sub-floors, cesspools, water cisterns, etc., emptied (includes 24 by East Elloe Machine) .....	61
Total ..	511

Cesspool contents were disposed of on farm land or by composting.

The volume of work continues to increase. It is interesting to note the figures for ordinary cesspools emptied in previous years, compared with last year:—

1953	1952	1951	1950	1949
390	347	319	270	251

The increase in work is largely due to the number of new cesspools being installed coupled with new connections to the water mains.

8. DRAINAGE, SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The maintenance of the sewage disposal plants serving the Stone Cross Estate and smaller housing site plants at Wormegay, Wereham, Northwold, St. Germans, Hilgay, Denver, Magdalen, Methwold and Feltwell continued.

Responsibility for maintenance passed to your Surveyor early in the year.

Considerable attention is necessary, and sedimentation tanks require complete desludging 3 or 4 times a year.

Work had also commenced on the construction of two more Housing Site plants at Marham and Stoke Ferry.

Some complaints of smell, allegedly from the Feltwell plant, were received. All bacterial filter beds smell to some extent, but as a result of numerous visits, an impression was formed that the complaints were exaggerated.

Conditions at the Wereham plant and the Northwold plant continued to be unsatisfactory. The Wereham plant was too small, and was due to be replaced, while the Northwold plant was to have considerable adaptations carried out in order to improve treatment and disposal of effluent.

The usual large number of complaints were received from Council house tenants served by cesspools which, for one reason or another, kept overflowing.

Maintenance of various dykes receiving sewage was continued throughout the year, and numerous new drainage systems were inspected by the Department to ensure a proper structural standard.

A long standing nuisance from a drainage system serving private property continued on the Buckenham Drive Housing Site, Stoke Ferry, and strong measures to get the nuisance abated were being pursued at the end of the year.

9. WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) Main Piped Supplies.

The Wisbech and District Water Board were responsible for the 3 sources of supply to the Pural District, viz.: The Northern half from the bore at Marham, the Southern half from the bore at Denton Lodge, Feltwell, and the Welney area by the purchase in bulk from the Ely R.D.C.

I am indebted to the Board's Engineer, Mr. J. K. Dawson, A.M.I.C.E., A.M.I.W.E., for the following information:—

The water supply of the area was quite satisfactory in quality and quantity. One case of contamination of the water occurred at Welney Water Tower. The trouble was traced to a crack in the roof of the tower through which bird faeces were washing during heavy rain. The contamination was quickly detected by routine sampling, and the tower taken out of supply until repairs and resterilisation had been effected.

None of the waters supplied by the Board are plumbo-solvent.

The post of Chemist and Bacteriologist was vacant for the first three months of the year but 293 bacteriological samples and 50 chemical analyses were made during the remainder of the year. The following tables give the results of the examinations and analyses:—

	Bacteriological Examinations			Chemical Analyses
	No. of tests	No. of tests	Total	Total
	Negative	Positive		
BOARD'S WORKS.				
Treated waters ..	120	9	129	50
Raw waters .....	87	24	111	
CONSUMERS' TAPS ....	24	4	58	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals ..	261	37	298	50
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

The differential tests on positive bacteriological examinations showed combinations of the following organisms:—

- B. Coli Type I (faecal)
- B. Coli Type II (non faecal)
- I.A.C. Group —
- E. Aerogenes Type I
- B. Aerogenes Type II
- Intermediate. Type I
- Intermediate. Type II

The relatively high percentage of positive bacteriological tests (95.5% negative) on treated waters was almost entirely due to the outbreak of pollution at Welney.

Treated water samples over the whole of the Downham Rural District area, exclusive of the Welney supply, were 99.4% negative.

The results of typical analyses of water was expressed by the Chemist as follows:—

“1. DENTON LODGE RAW WATER.

“ The sample was clear and bright in appearance, on the alkaline side  
 “ of neutrality and free from injurious metals. The water is only of  
 “ moderate hardness and contains no excess of mineral constituents in  
 “ solution. It is of satisfactory organic and bacterial purity.

“ These results are consistent with a pure and wholesome water suit-  
 “ able for public supply purposes”.

"2. MARHAM MIXED TREATED WATER.

" The sample was clear and bright in appearance, on the alkaline side  
 " of neutrality and free from injurious metals, apart from a negligible  
 " trace of iron, which was probably derived from iron pipes. The water is  
 " of moderate hardness, but contains no excess of mineral constituents  
 " in solution. It is of highly satisfactory organic and bacterial purity.

" These results are consistent with a pure and wholesome water suit-  
 " able for public supply purposes".

The number of new connections made during the year was as follows:—

Barton Bendish .....	9	Saddlebow .....	1
Boughton .....	19	Shouldham .....	6
Brandon Creek .....	3	Southery .....	12
Crimpleham .....	1	Stoke Ferry .....	19
Denver .....	25	Stow .....	11
Feltwell .....	36	Stradsett .....	3
Fincham .....	10	Tottenham .....	2
Fordham .....	2	Watlington .....	6
Hilgay .....	19	Welney .....	6
Hockwold .....	9	Wereham .....	8
Marham .....	8	West Dereham .....	10
Methwold .....	14	Wiggenhall St. Germans..	3
Nordelph .....	1	Wiggenhall St. Mary M.	14
Northwold .....	14	Wimbotsham .....	14
Roxham .....	1	Wormegay .....	9
Eunton Holme .....	6	Wretton .....	10
			Total .. 311

The 6" main between Stradsett and Wereham which linked the Denton Lodge and Marham distribution areas was completed in the early months of the year. Work on the extensions to the Denton Lodge pumphouse and the electrification of the pumps also proceeded during the year, and the installation of a new 30,000 g.p.h. pump was expected to begin in January, 1954. It was also hoped that a start would be made during the next half year on the Council's Agricultural Extension Scheme, estimated to cost £31,000.

(b) *Small Water Supplies.*

During the year, 14 samples were taken for bacteriological examination and two for chemical analysis.

Three owners laid on mains supplies owing to unsatisfactory results and two supplies were satisfactory.

Several samples were taken from the land spring at Wereham, known as "the conduit", the water from which is used by quite a number of inhabitants for drinking and domestic purposes. Intermittent pollution was apparent especially after heavy rain. A notice board was erected by the Council advising the boiling of all such water before use.

10. FACTORIES.

At the 31st December there were in the District 55 factories where mechanical power was employed and 6 factories with no mechanical power. The majority of these premises were visited during the year, there being 51 inspections

Full liaison was maintained with H.M. Inspector of Factories, and the sanitary conditions generally were quite satisfactory. It was only necessary to serve one Informal Notice in respect of unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation, and this Notice had been complied with at the end of the year.

#### 11. DESTRUCTION OF RATS AND MICE.

The Rodent Operative had a busy year; his work in all parts of the District involved 2753 visits.

A total of 461 separate treatments were carried out and a charge was made for 120 such treatments at agricultural and business premises. In most cases, one treatment involved several properties. No legal proceedings were necessary.

The charge for treatment was increased from 6/4d. per hour to 7/- per hour in February, but at domestic premises, free treatment was continued.

As usual, poisoning was the main method of treatment, the poisons used being mainly Warfarin and Zinc Phosphide. It was found that a large number of farmers were themselves giving treatment by Warfarin, owing to the fact that tedious pre-baiting was not required, and the danger to stock was considerably minimised.

Liaison was maintained with the Pest Control staff of the Norfolk Agricultural Executive Committee.

Fifty per cent of the cost of the service after deduction of income from treatment of business premises is recoverable from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

G. S. SENNITT,

*Senior Sanitary Inspector.*









